

**CITY OF NEWARK  
DELAWARE**

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**March 27, 2019**

Those present at 7:00 p.m.:

Presiding:	Deputy Mayor Stu Markham District 1, Mark Morehead District 2, Jerry Clifton District 3, Jennifer Wallace District 4, Chris Hamilton District 5, Jason Lawhorn
Absent:	Mayor Polly Sierer
Staff Members:	City Manager Tom Coleman Deputy City Solicitor Geena Khomenko Director of Finance David Del Grande Planning and Development Director Mary Ellen Gray Acting City Secretary Tara Schiano

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1. Mr. Markham called the Special Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
  2. Ms. Markham noted the purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues around student housing and potential solutions.

Mr. Lawhorn reported he had requested this topic be discussed at a Council meeting. He noted residential neighborhoods from all parts of the City are seeing an increase in student rentals. Mr. Lawhorn said residents reported calls from out-of-state real estate companies, offering to purchase single-family homes. He announced development projects primarily targeted student housing. However, there was a desire for projects for downsizing seniors, families, and young professionals. Mr. Lawhorn believed there were no incentives for developers to consider development for populations outside of student housing because of its high profitability. He thought the current rental prices in the City were high which made affordable housing projects unfeasible. Mr. Lawhorn believed the City's low-income voucher system was not entirely effective.

According to the 2014 Rental Housing Needs Assessment (NRA), Mr. Lawhorn said overall vacancy rates in the fall of 2015 were projected to be at 1.9%. He believed the goal should be a vacancy rate of >5%. Mr. Lawhorn listed student growth as follows: (1) In 2014, there were 20,550 students at the University and 10,444 of them lived off-campus and (2) In 2018, there were 22,385 students and 11,181 lived off-campus. Mr. Lawhorn said there were many changes since the RNA was conducted. He announced approximately 1,900 additional students looked for housing. Mr. Lawhorn expressed data suggests approximately 3,400 more students in the private rental market. This number is in addition to the existing 2014 status which was already problematic at a vacancy rate of 1.9%.

Mr. Lawhorn said private development through 2018 added 802 beds since 2014; additionally, some of the development in 2013 was not completed and may contribute as well. He believed private development absorbed a relatively small percentage of the 3,400-student increase in demand. However, private development did not address the need to add housing to raise the vacancy rate. Mr. Lawhorn stated the numbers did not address the percentage of students who lived outside the City and drove or rode the bus to class.

Mr. Lawhorn believed the University's help was crucial to solving the student housing problems in the City. He said the University currently planned to construct a 750-person dorm on South College Avenue within the next few years. Mr. Lawhorn thought City staff needed to be more engaged with the University's staff for strategic planning. He believed the City and University needed to improve sharing of data and long-term planning. Mr. Lawhorn thought Council should direct Mr. Coleman to focus on the relationship between City staff and University staff.

Mr. Lawhorn listed the following high-level solutions to address the student housing problem as follows: (1) Develop a plan to incentivize attractive, safe, high-density student housing in downtown locations already occupied by older, low-density student housing and (2) Increase number of renters from 3 to 4 on exempt streets per the 2014 RNA recommendation. He believed these concerns needed to be considered as the city approached another Comprehensive Development Plan update. Mr. Lawhorn thought staff needed direction to review data annually with Council. After supply was more in line with demand, Mr. Lawhorn thought another RNA would be in order. He believed policy should be implemented that may encourage affordable housing for seniors and young professionals, create competition among landlords or City managed partnerships to “take back” residential neighborhoods that have been overrun by students.

**3. Mr. Markham opened discussion to the table.**

Mr. Morehead questioned if there was spokesperson for the University that could speak to the 3,400-student increase. Caitlin Olsen, University of Delaware, reviewed the numbers with Mr. Lawhorn and said they made sense to her. She expressed she spoke to higher-level University administrators who agreed with the numbers as well.

Ms. Wallace wondered how the University knew there was sufficient housing for the student attendees. She questioned whether the University assumed there was enough housing in the area to adequately accommodate all students they would admit. Regarding on-campus housing, Ms. Olsen said the University admitted 4,200 first-year students and there were 7,400 beds. She thought the University easily housed the first-year students; however, the demand changed because upper-classmen often wanted to live in University housing. Ms. Wallace said her question pertained more towards off-campus housing; moreover, she asked how the University knew that students – who would not live on campus – would have a place to live. She asked if the University heard from students if they were not able to find adequate housing.

Michelle Kane, Senior Associate Director for Assignments and Business Services at the University, provided clarification regarding the University’s housing numbers. She believed the numbers presented by Mr. Lawhorn were accurate; however, she emphasized more beds were built in the area prior to Pencader’s closure that were torn down. Ms. Kane said the full-time undergraduate population was 18,334. She announced the University guaranteed and required first-year students to live on campus. Ms. Kane said approximately 95% of the incoming class took advantage of the opportunity to live on campus. She stated 5% of students stayed off-campus because they were 21-years of age or older, are married, or lived within 30-miles of commuting distance with a parent or legal guardian. Ms. Kane thought the University could use a greater grasp related to how many students commuted to campus. She believed the number of commuting students greatly increased after the first year. According to Ms. Kane, 50% of the University’s sophomore students from the first-year class wanted to live on campus, with the number dramatically reducing after that. Ms. Kane thought the University potentially assumed there was enough student housing as they did not hear students complaining that they could not find housing opportunities.

Ms. Wallace thanked Ms. Kane for the information and believed it was important for Council to understand how the University housing process worked. She questioned whether the University had access to data that Council did not have access to. Ms. Wallace asked Ms. Kane if the University’s student housing needs could change this year with the additional 3,400 students that needed housing. Ms. Kane said the University had a net loss this year of under 250 spaces and believed further research was needed. Ms. Wallace questioned whether the University would be willing to come back to Council and give a presentation on the student housing needs for 2020. Ms. Wallace believed there was a short-term housing problem that needed to be recognized; however, she thought it would not be possible for the City to move forward with a Comprehensive Development Plan in the future without the University’s information. Ms. Wallace thought a yearly presentation from the University to Council regarding student housing needs would be helpful.

Ms. Olsen announced Ms. Kane would be on the Student Housing Committee and thought it would open lines of communication between the University and City. She announced City and University would make plans to meet in the future and further discuss this issue. In the process of planning for the out years, Ms. Olsen thought it made sense to discuss University admissions as well. Ms. Wallace thought students from the English Language Institute (ELI) needed to be included in these calculations and Ms. Olsen agreed with her.

Mr. Hamilton expressed the City wanted to work with the University and believed the feeling was mutual. He believed it was very important for the City and University to work as a team to address the problem. Mr. Hamilton thought the City could change their model to help the University and City

communities coexist. Ms. Olsen referenced a new building that was scheduled to be built for student housing on South College Avenue. Mr. Hamilton believed this building would help with the student housing need. He thought the University looked into graduate student housing on the STAR campus and wanted to confirm the details. Mr. Hamilton believed the University went through a housing crisis in 1981 when he went to college. As a result, Mr. Hamilton said he and many other students were required to live in forced triples and questioned whether the University planned to triple up existing on-campus housing.

Ms. Olsen understood that any new student housing build in the University was built with the square footage to be tripled up. While the University preferred doubles instead of triples, Ms. Olsen said new housing was built to fit the larger number if need be. Mr. Hamilton questioned whether the University had plans to house transfer program students for students that transferred from Delaware Technical and Community College (Del Tech). Ms. Kane said the University admitted more resident, full-time students than ever before. She clarified students were admitted to the University as undergraduates or were admitted through the Associate in Arts programs. Ms. Kane announced the transfer population consisted mainly of students who attended another four-year institution for a year or more before attending the University of Delaware.

Mr. Clifton asked for clarification regarding a prior comment which mentioned the University would have a deficit of 250 beds. Ms. Kane said the University's net loss – after the Tower's closing and gain of the University Courtyard apartments – was 377 bed spaces. She said the University engaged in a master lease for 100 bed spaces; therefore, 277 bed spaces remained. Mr. Clifton said University Courtyards was in the City since 1999 and believed there were 880 beds. He was concerned with relocating students from the Towers to the University Courtyards and any associated deficit. Mr. Clifton applauded the fact that the University recognized limitations and issues with student housing and thanked them for their willingness to work with Council.

Mr. Lawhorn thanked the University for being responsive to questions regarding student housing. He believed it was important for the City and University to continue collaborative work on this issue. Mr. Lawhorn echoed Ms. Wallace's suggestion regarding the University presenting an annual update to Council about student housing. He suggested a joint University and City staff annual presentation to Council where they could provide updates on collaborative work between both parties.

Mr. Markham asked Ms. Olsen if she would be willing to stay during public comment and she confirmed she would be able to. He suggested for the University to consider data from parking permits; specifically, where the addresses associated with each permit were located. Mr. Markham believed student rental houses often were blamed for traffic; however, Mr. Markham thought they did not contribute to the majority of traffic issues. Mr. Markham believed commuter students contributed to the majority of increased traffic and wanted to see if there was data to substantiate this.

Mr. Markham questioned whether the University forecasted enrollment decreasing in the future.

Mr. Clifton thought it was necessary to determine how the City reacts to the University pushing student housing out into the community. He believed it was necessary to have qualifiable data available and feared the data would be stale by the time it was collected. Mr. Clifton believed the City operated in reactive mode to the problem and hoped to address a better path forward. Mr. Markham questioned what items were necessary to include in a data collection regarding student housing in order to direct staff. Mr. Clifton thought the data collection would be more likely to stem from the University than it did from the City as only the University was aware of their own long-term forecast.

Mr. Lawhorn agreed with Mr. Clifton's concerns and thought the pillars of high-level data were as follows:

1. Student-growth or decline;
2. Private development or reduction or private development, &
3. Dorms and student rental house increase or reduction.

Mr. Lawhorn believed people with expertise in planning or housing could take the pillars of high-level data much further and drill out metrics and ideas. He thought non-student growth needed to be considered as well and thought it would be nice to include the growth of affordable housing in the future. Mr. Markham it was necessary to determine what information they wanted and who would be tasked with providing it.

Mr. Hamilton thought there was a trend towards online education and questioned whether the University planned to capture some of that market. He believed there were concerns to the effect the student population would decrease and questioned how the University would compete in this arena. Mr.

Hamilton questioned whether potential overdevelopment could be worked into a plan. He thought plans could be made regarding student housing in certain areas to ensure student housing or non-student housing could be repurposed. Mr. Hamilton thought it was important to discuss how student rental housing affected the City's neighborhoods and believed some of the neighborhoods were overrun.

Mr. Morehead thought developers' long-term activities played a key part in this issue and believed they [the developers] had a perspective several years out. He thought information and projections could be requested from developers as it might provide direction. Mr. Morehead announced he owned an investment property and was familiar with his target market because of its location. He restated there were 1,046 rental permits that the City could legally ask for the lease information. Mr. Morehead thought the City had this information through the utility bills; moreover, he believed utility bills would show which properties turned over with the University's semesters. He recommended for the City to data-mine their own data.

Mr. Markham questioned whether Mr. Coleman understood the data requests from Council and Mr. Coleman confirmed this was the case.

Mr. Hamilton thought the University conducted a study which determined there were 1,200 available beds and was unsure if Council received an answer regarding how the data was acquired. Mr. Coleman confirmed the data was for next school year and it was accurate at the time it was provided. Mr. Lawhorn said he called every place listed by the University and confirmed all locations with the exception of one were booked at 97% or higher for the current school year. He announced the lowest was 94% for One Easton before the fire.

Mr. Markham asked Mr. Coleman to summarize the direction/tasks information from the University. Mr. Coleman listed the following:

1. Annually request from the University as to how many beds they sold on campus each year. This would take into account if the University tripled up and the impact it would have on bed count;
2. How many beds have the University contracted with the private market each year;
3. How many commuters;
4. How many Newark off-campus residents;
5. The five-year outlook for enrollment, &
6. The five-year outlook for housing units and beds.

Mr. Coleman said large large-scale developers and landlords would be asked for their general outlook towards construction. Mr. Lawhorn agreed with Mr. Coleman's remarks and asked City staff to provide Council with additional information they deemed pertinent as they worked to address the problem.

Mr. Hamilton thought it was important to break down off-campus housing in terms of what the City was able to control. He believed there were areas just outside of City limits where students rented where he thought the City could not solve the problem. Mr. Hamilton asked for a geographical map of students who lived outside City limits to provide additional perspective.

Mr. Markham questioned if New Castle County (NCC) had rental permits which outside of City limits but in close proximity to it. Mr. Coleman said he would look into this issue.

Ms. Wallace wanted clarification regarding whether the University helped students find off-campus housing. She questioned whether the University would consider helping students locate off-campus housing in the short-term; specifically, putting together a list of apartment complexes both inside and outside of the City. Ms. Wallace thought this would funnel students to apartment complexes instead of illegal rentals in the City's neighborhoods. She believed there could be a combined resource on the University and City's websites to help students find off-campus housing. Ms. Olsen said the University was in the process of working on their second off-campus housing fair. She stated the fair would allow them to bring in landlords and rental owners in order to connect them with students. Ms. Olsen announced the University currently had an off-campus housing guide on a separate website. Additionally, Ms. Olsen said the University's Student Life offices were able to help students find off-campus housing.

Ms. Wallace asked Ms. Olsen if there were additional measures the University could take to promote their resources for off-campus housing to students. She asked Ms. Olsen for recommendations on what Newark could do as a City to help students. Ms. Olsen thought it might be beneficial to connect the University's off-campus housing information to the City's website.

Mr. Hamilton said there were areas around the University that became heavily populated with student rentals. He believed there needed to be a balance and thought it would help the University as well. Mr. Hamilton said his neighborhood used to be considered a neighborhood where professors lived. He believed addressing the student housing crisis would help save Newark's neighborhoods. Mr. Hamilton recently spoke with Ms. Olsen regarding the fact that the University used to purchase houses along South College Avenue. He hoped the University would make an effort to look at the surrounding communities and encourage professors to live there. Mr. Hamilton thought some universities had an incentive program for professors to help them live in university towns. He hoped the University would consider similar measures.

Ms. Olsen spoke with Mr. Coleman and Ms. Gray about the University's mortgage assistance program as it applied to certain streets. She announced she would look into the University's street list and would ensure they lined up with Council's requests and how they thought the community should grow.

Mr. Lawhorn believed there were suggestions for University assistance programs in the RNA and believed the ideas related to promoting home occupancy.

Mr. Markham summarized the potential solutions from Council regarding the student housing issue as follows:

1. Council and staff with and better coordinate with University administration for a long-term partnership;
2. Reclaim strategic planning, not based on one-individual from either generation;
3. Improve sharing of data and long-term planning between the City and University, &
4. Direct staff to review data annually with Council as it pertained to projections.

Mr. Morehead announced Kevin Mayhew was one of the City's main landlords in town and was the president of the Newark Landlord Association (NLA). He asked Mr. Mayhew to explain the timing of when students started looking for housing next year. Mr. Mayhew said timing depended on what year students were college. By time students became juniors or rising seniors, Mr. Mayhew stated students realized they needed to look for housing in September for the following year. Mr. Mayhew said sophomores looked for housing later in October. He expressed his student housing properties were full by the middle of October in 2018, which was faster than any other year. Mr. Mayhew announced there was still a high demand for student off-campus housing as he received inquiries every week. He personally believed the demand for student housing this year was greater than in previous years.

Mr. Mayhew ran numbers when he heard about the University Tower's shutting down in 2018 and heard there were approximately 1,200 beds available. He announced the 1,200 beds were available for the next coming year [2019] and found additional beds that were available in the Studio Green/Park Place complex. He believed the increase in student enrollment combined with the inventory online – with Benny Street and South Main, holding in another 246 beds – there would still be a shortage of 550 beds when the 1,200 came off-line. Mr. Mayhew thought the solution to address the student housing issue would be complicated and thought there were many unknown factors.

Mr. Hamilton asked Mr. Mayhew how he obtained this information on occupancy rates. Mr. Mayhew said he called the leasing managers as the president of the NLA who gave him this information.

Mr. Lawhorn said another potential solution was to follow through with the Rental Housing Needs Assessment (RNA) recommendation to go from three to four existing exempt streets, but excluding extending to other streets. Mr. Markham asked for Council's consensus on this solution as he believed it went to the Planning Commission and was very upsetting to residents.

Ms. Wallace did not support the RNA's recommendation to go from three to four existing exempt streets. She believed the matter happened illegally and did not know if it would help the City as far as numbers. Ms. Wallace thought sanctioning four streets would result in future sanctions for other streets. She did not think this was a real solution to provide Council with the numbers they desired and thought it would potentially exacerbate the problem.

Mr. Hamilton echoed Ms. Wallace's statements and did not support the RNA's recommendation.

Mr. Clifton agreed with Ms. Wallace's statements and did not support the RNA's recommendation.

Mr. Markham said the consensus from council did not support the RNA's recommendation to go from three to four exempt streets.

4. Mr. Markham opened the floor to public comment. He informed the public he wanted feedback and comments regarding Council's discussion as well as ideas that they wished Council to consider.

John Morgan, District 1, thought the University could urge more freshmen to live at home, expanding the three-mile radius to a five or ten-mile radius. Dr. Morgan read into the record a couple of sentences – made by former President Trabant – from the minutes of a University Faculty Senate meeting held in 1988:

*"President Trabant noted that there were too many undergraduates on the Newark campus, and that the current numbers should be reduced by at least 250 students in 1989-1990. Such a reduction, he concluded, might also contribute to better relations with the City of Newark...The reduction of the number of undergraduate students does not apply to graduate students, of which there are too few. The principal strategy for reducing the student body will be through the admissions process, though there will be no reduction in the continuing effort to increase the number of minority admissions. Reduction in admissions will come primarily from out-of-state applicants."*

Dr. Morgan acknowledged these statements were made in a different era which vastly differed from today. Over the last decade, he believed there was much less concern for how the University's development impacts neighborhoods. Dr. Morgan thought this lack of concern was evident with the power plant in 2013; specifically, where residents and neighbors were shut out of the process until it was announced as a done deal. A reason Dr. Morgan believed this lack of concern also was substantiated since most University administrators did not live close to campus. Dr. Morgan thought most University administrators lived at least a mile away from campus or in Wilmington, Delaware or Pennsylvania. He said exceptions to this observation were as follows: (1) Provost Dr. Dan Rich, who still lived on Beverly Road and (2) Provost Domenico Grasso, who lived on Orchard Avenue. Dr. Morgan said Alan Brangman, former University Executive Vice President and treasurer, lived in Wilmington, Delaware

While Dr. Morgan thought it was a great idea for University and City staff to interact; however, he said there was a lot of turnover in recent years with the University's staff. He distributed a copy of an article in the UD Review, in which the President of Student Government said, "The decision to shut down the towers was a decision made at the board level." As long as the University had a Board of Trustees that made decisions in secret, Dr. Morgan thought the City would continue to receive information too late. Dr. Morgan thought the City needed a seat at the table before decisions were made by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Hamilton believed the University had a 30-mile radius, not a three-mile radius. Dr. Morgan said freshmen could commute 30-miles and Ms. Olsen confirmed this was the case. He was glad to hear about the 30-mile radius; however, he thought it indicated there was not much room for further improvement.

Georgia Wampler, East Park Place, believed the University – not the City – needed more student housing. Ms. Wampler thought affordable housing and housing for seniors were current, important issues. She did not think Council should wait to address affordable housing and housing for seniors until the student housing problem was addressed. Ms. Wampler believed the University operated as a business and thought housing students did not make as much money as enrolling them. She thought the City needed to press the University to offer housing. Ms. Wampler referenced the STAR campus where the possibility of graduate student housing was discussed. She thought the University should consider constructing apartment style housing for undergraduates in addition to graduate students on the STAR campus.

Ms. Wampler thought Council should consider a financial bonus for people who purchased rental properties and gave up rental permits to use the properties for their own housing. Mr. Lawhorn agreed with many of Ms. Wampler's statements. He clarified he did not want to wait to address the affordable housing component until after the student housing issue was addressed; however, he was not sure how it was possible to address it. Mr. Lawhorn's perception was that any affordable housing that was built would be rented out to students.

Al Porach, District 2, suggested for Council and the audience to read *The American College Town* by Blake Gumprecht. In this book, Mr. Porach said an entire chapter was devoted to the relationship between the City and the University of Delaware. Mr. Porach said the NLA and others filed suit against the University and City in 2003, based on certain issues involving the Landlord Tenant Ordinance. He

summarized the legal decision from the law suit to the effect that the close proximity of students and non-students created tension. While most students' behaviors were socially acceptable, Mr. Porach said there were some students who did not behave appropriately. Mr. Porach said the City enacted Ordinance 99-10 on April 26, 1999. He thought the City's data collection at the time determined single-family rentals represented only 971 out of 8,400 housing units. However, Mr. Porach believed this type of housing accounted for 41.9% of police department arrests and 58% of housing violations in the City.

Mr. Porach questioned if there were current reports, documenting the number of arrests or police complaints for rental and non-rental units in the City. Beginning in 1997, Mr. Porach collected data on the rental properties within the City. In 1997, Mr. Porach said the City broke out the data for the rental properties based on items such as single-family homes, mobile family rental permits, and excluded streets. Mr. Porach questioned whether rental permits could be reported based on single-family home rental permits, mobile family home permits, and excluded street permits.

Meghan Mullennix, Student Government Representative, said she lived at 306 Haines Street. She thought it would be helpful for people to be specific when referring to problems with student housing. Ms. Mullennix believed people generally spoke about three issues when they referred to students as problems in the housing market:

1. Students as community members in their behaviors;
2. Students as community members that are temporary by nature, &
3. Students as actors and their affect in the real estate housing market.

Ms. Mullennix believed the solutions to the three issues were very different. She thought the behavioral issue was easiest, most actionable item where solutions were possible. She thought the other two issues [students as community members that are temporary by nature & students as actors and their effect in the real estate housing market] were more difficult to resolve. Additionally, Ms. Mullennix believed specificity when referring to students as problems in the housing market helped keep conversations productive. Ms. Mullennix thought young professionals often were referred to as the desirable individuals and the City would like to have more of them in the community. She thought it was important to recognize that young professionals were most likely to be recent University graduates. Ms. Mullennix believed the experience students had in the City while they were students would impact whether they wanted to stay in Newark as young professionals. She believed the decline of young professionals was a state-wide problem as people left for jobs in other cities. Ms. Mullennix thought the majority of Delaware's growth was due to immigration of older individuals who liked the tax benefits.

Dorothea Shover, 27 Sunset Road, appreciated Mr. Hamilton's comments which referenced her neighborhood. Ms. Shover announced the neighborhood experienced peace for half of a year when students were not in the neighborhood. She moved to the City in 2005 and described her neighborhood as hell from that point on. Ms. Shover mentioned various unacceptable student behavior she frequently observed, such as public urination, large parties, and excessive alcohol consumption. Ms. Shover and her neighbor called the Newark Police Department (NPD) 74 times last year (2018).

Jean White, District 1, thought it was well-known that the University purchased individual homes and houses around Newark. Ms. White restated comments made to the effect the University encouraged professors to live in Newark. She thought faculty often lived in University-owned houses for the first year. Ms. White requested information regarding how many houses or individual homes the University currently owned around Newark. She believed there was a house on Orchard Avenue that was used as a place for incoming professors to live. Ms. White said this house was next to a house that was not owned by the University; however, she believed a University professor lived in it. After a few years, Ms. White thought the University took the house where they let faculty live in and demolished it. She believed the professor who lived next door to the house was very upset by its demolition. Ms. White thought a parking lot was built at the house's former location, next to the Amy E. Dupont Music building.

Mr. Markham asked staff to include Ms. White's suggestion to obtain information about the number of University owned houses to include in the data collection list.

Mr. Mayhew, developer and president of the NLA, commended Mr. Lawhorn for his research on this important matter. He agreed with Mr. Lawhorn's comment to the effect Council should identify and act on low-hanging fruit. Mr. Mayhew thought one of the low-hanging fruit items was to allow up to four tenants on the student-exempt streets. At the Planning Commission's meeting on May 1, 2018, Mr. Lawhorn said a recommendation from the RNA to add more student-exempt streets was not approved. He said another idea from the RNA that was presented at the Planning Commission's May 1, 2018 meeting was to take the existing student-exempt streets and allow four tenants. He believed Ms. Gray did a great

job at the meeting by separating the discussion of five different zones. In the four zones – away from Park Place – Mr. Mayhew said there was little if any conversation. Mr. Mayhew urged Council to revisit the RNA's recommendation to take existing student-exempt streets and allow four tenants.

According to his calculations, Mr. Mayhew said there were approximately 137-beds being unused legally on streets that were already student-exempt. Mr. Mayhew believed Council wanted students to live in walkable areas that are close to campus where they were not required to drive their cars. He thought the Rental Housing Needs Assessment committee found it unbelievable that there were 137 unused beds on student-exempt streets; moreover, Mr. Mayhew believed the unused beds were located in the areas where Council wanted students to live. He encouraged the audience to read the minutes from the Planning Commission's meeting on May 1, 2018. Mr. Mayhew said the Old Newark Civic Association (ONCA) was reborn from the May 1, 2018 Planning Commission meeting and believed it was a great thing for the area.

Mr. Mayhew addressed a prior comment from Ms. Wallace where she expressed concern that allowing four tenants in a unit would set a precedent for occupancy to increase to five or more students. His personal experience was that students these days did not want to share bedrooms or bathrooms.

Edgar Small, 188 West Main Street, believed part of Council's solution to the problem was to encourage development and hoped Council would use proper data. Mr. Small believed the RNA was a severely flawed document in terms of where the data came from and how reliable it was. He thought Council had sufficient data at their fingertips that could answer questions related to the number of student renters as well as how much they paid per person. He estimated people who lived in the house next to him paid well over \$3,000 a month in rent, which he thought was more than the RNA would document. Mr. Small believed renters frequently exceeded the number that was permitted. He thought back yards would not seem like parking lots if there were only three people who lived in a house. Mr. Small did not support increasing the number of renters permitted in a house from three to four.

Jeff Standard, Murray Road, asked for clarification regarding why the City felt they needed to resolve issues that were created due to the University's lack of available student housing. Mr. Standard attended the University in the 1980s and rented a property past Ogletown Road with a group of college students. He believed there was an adequate supply of housing within five miles of the University. Mr. Standard was unsure why the City wanted to take on the additional responsibility of increased student housing. In Mr. Standard's opinion, he thought the City could spend time addressing other needs in the community rather than addressing what he considered to be a University problem. He thought NCC could help to absorb this issue as it was a state entity.

Howard Smith, District 4, thought the RNA recommendation to go from three to four renters on a property was a very bad idea. Mr. Smith believed the general approach to the student housing issue was to get more students out of residential neighborhoods and believed increasing the number of renters would have the opposite effect. Mr. Smith believed increasing the number of renters from three to four people would provide landlords with additional money – around \$500-\$600 per month – for doing absolutely nothing, with no benefit to the City. Mr. Smith believed increasing the number of renters would make the property worth more money than it was currently worth, making it harder for anyone to buy it and occupy it as a homeowner. He thought additional parking problems would be created.

5. Mr. Markham returned the matter to the table for further discussion.

Mr. Hamilton thought many of the concerns regarding the University's attitude would be addressed through improved communication. He informed the audience that the University President, Dennis Assanis, lived in his neighborhood. Mr. Hamilton said a University Dean recently moved into his neighborhood and thought it was necessary for the University to provide funding to incentive faculty to live in the City. He believed there were steps that both the University and City could take to help preserve Newark's neighborhoods. Mr. Hamilton thought the City did not have to wait to address senior housing concerns; specifically, he announced the City owned a valuable piece of land down town behind the Grotto's parking lot. He thought Council could help address the senior housing problem through rezoning property currently owned by the City.

Ms. Wallace believed the City's housing market was set by student rentals and currently was inflated. Until the student rental housing need was met, Ms. Wallace thought it would be difficult to offer affordable housing to seniors and others in the City. She asked for clarification as to whether the City had a benefit program for buy-back of rental permits. Mr. Coleman said the City used to offer a benefit program for buy-back of rental permits; specifically, the City would provide people with money towards a down payment if they purchased a house and gave up the associated rental permit. There was discussion



at the table which determined the rental buy-back benefit was discontinued at the moment. Ms. Wallace thought Council should discuss the potential to bring back the rental buy-back benefit program.

She questioned whether the City knew how many student rental permits versus regular rental permits they had. Mr. Coleman said the data was not good at the moment. Ms. Wallace asked if this item could be added to Council's request for data. Mr. Coleman said this could be added; however, it would take a lot of work to discern the data. He announced staff currently worked to address and identify illegal rentals in the City through a GIS exercise. Mr. Coleman believed staff was pretty far along in the process and expected an update soon. Discussion at the table commenced and Council determined they would follow up with staff regarding how the information would be processed.

Ms. Wallace said she would be happy for the student housing issues to be NCC's problem; however, she heard from residents that it was not NCC's problem. She referenced the fact there were illegal student rentals throughout the City and believed efforts needed to be made by both the City and NCC. Ms. Wallace thought the City needed to provide some student housing for the University.

Mr. Morehead thought a potential solution to this problem was for Council to hold more meetings similar to tonight's meeting. He believed meetings like this permitted Council to discuss policy and associated challenges the City and residents approached together. Mr. Morehead thought it was helpful to gather information from subject experts as well as residents. He believed additional Special Council meetings would decrease the length of regular Council meetings. Mr. Morehead thanked members of the public for attending the meeting and extended particular thanks to Ms. Wampler. He thought Council as a body set different authorizations as to what could be built where in terms of development. Mr. Morehead thanked Ms. Mullennix for her comments and believed they were spot-on.

Mr. Morehead said discussion at the meeting focused on behavior and raw quantity of available student housing. He believed Council needed to look at the effects of student behavior on the residents' quality of life. Mr. Morehead supported the idea of the City providing assistance for residents who participated in the rental permit buy-back program. He thought the program's concept could expand to houses on certain streets to incentivize people to live there.

Mr. Morehead announced developers came to Council to approve projects. He emphasized Council was not obligated to approve developers' projects. Mr. Morehead thought there were many plans that came before Council that were not by-right plans.

Mr. Clifton restated the University had an incentive program for faculty to live in Newark close to campus. He believed there were certain parameters for the University's incentive program that pertained to which houses qualified for the program. Mr. Clifton thought it was necessary to determine what would be the main reason for people to take advantage of such a program. He believed a conversation which discussed the potential for a community member to sit on the University's Board of Trustees occurred 18+ years ago. As a result of this discussion, Mr. Clifton said the Board of Trustees elected former Senator Steve Amick to serve on the board. Mr. Clifton thought Council needed to embrace the idea of having a community member serve on the University's Board of Trustees. He thought including a community member on the board would help alleviate some concerns regarding decisions made by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Clifton agreed with common sentiments which referred to Kells Avenue, Park Place, Sunset Road and Winslow Road as "ground zero". He thought these areas shifted away from being the family friendly neighborhoods they used to be. Mr. Clifton was optimistic regarding Council's path forward.

Mr. Lawhorn believed Council ran out of time to hear from the Planning Department this evening and asked them to provide a presentation in the near future. He said the Planning Department's presentation would focus on the concept of smart development (i.e. high-density development and development in the down town area) in a responsible manner.

Mr. Lawhorn believed members of Council and the public made great points and asked thought-provoking questions. According to Mr. Lawhorn, he did not believe the problem was a student problem and described it as a housing problem.

He thought the RNA provided great data and believed the problem associated with its data was that it appeared to make the situation look better than it was. Mr. Lawhorn believed it was necessary for the City to address the student housing problem as many of the issues pertained to residents' concerns. He thought the City could work together with the University to look at the problem. Mr. Lawhorn believed this would increase the University's buy-in to the student housing issue as the student's were the

University's customers. He thought students looked at quality of education, available housing, and the cost of education and considered Newark to be a major part of their college experience. Mr. Lawhorn thought it would hurt the University if the City of Newark did not flourish.

Mr. Markham recommended Council and staff to review former Councilman Tuttle's recommendation for meetings from approximately six years ago. He said Councilman Tuttle recommended two workshops and one meeting to vote. Mr. Markham thought this approach would be productive for Council. He anticipated an update soon from the Planning Department and Ms. Gray said it was in the works.

Mr. Markham was pleased to observe the meeting was well-attended and thanked the University for their participation and attendance.

**5. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.**

Tara Schiano  
Acting City Secretary

/wcp